

## **World Heritage Site: The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales**

### **Introduction**

UNESCO defines World Heritage Sites as ‘places of Outstanding Universal Value to the whole of humanity. This means that their cultural and/or natural significance is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity’. It is the highest recognition of heritage value.

This section provides a heritage impact assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of *The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales* World Heritage Site. It follows the guidance outlined in *Managing Change in World Heritage Sites in Wales* (Cadw 2017) and *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties* (ICOMOS 2011).

The assessment has been produced by David Robertson and Andrew Josephs of Andrew Josephs Associates (AJA). AJA was contracted to prepare the cultural heritage chapter of the Environment Statement, including this heritage impact assessment, by SLR Consulting Limited, on behalf of Welsh Slate (Breedon Group) Limited.

### **Methodology**

A range of sources have been consulted, including:

Cadw 2019 *Cof Cymru*, <https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/cof-cymru> (accessed 9-14 October 2019, including the register entries for all 58 of Wales’ Registered Historic Landscapes).

Cadw 2019 *Dinorwig Registered Historic Landscape Full Report*, [https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/historiclandscape/FullReport?lang=&id=HLW%20\(Gw\)%206](https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/historiclandscape/FullReport?lang=&id=HLW%20(Gw)%206) (accessed 29 October 2019)

Cadw 2019 *Ogwen Valley Registered Historic Landscape Full Report*, [https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/historiclandscape/FullReport?lang=&id=HLW%20\(Gw\)%2010](https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/historiclandscape/FullReport?lang=&id=HLW%20(Gw)%2010) (accessed 28 October 2019)

Google Earth 2019 *Google Earth Pro/Street View*.

Gwynedd Council 2019 *The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales: Nomination as a World Heritage Site – Management Plan for Public Engagement*, Gwynedd Council report.

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) 2011 *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*, ICOMOS, Paris.

SLR Consulting 2015, *Penrhyn Quarry Environmental Statement Viewpoint A-K*, SLR Consulting drawings PQR 6/6 to 6/16.

SLR Consulting 2015-19, *Penrhyn Quarry North Western Extension: Zone of Theoretical Visibility*, SLR Consulting drawings NWE 6/5, NWE 6/6 and PQR 6/5.

### **Site history and description**

Gwynedd Council and its partners – the Welsh Government, National Museum of Wales, the Royal commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, the Snowdonia National Park, the National Trust, Bangor University and key landowners – have been developing a World Heritage Site nomination for the *Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales* since 2009. In 2011 it was included on the United Kingdom’s list of nominated properties and in 2011 announced as the next bid to be presented to UNESCO by the UK Government. It was added to UNESCO’s tentative list on 27 January 2012.

The formal bid was presented to UNESCO in 2019 and in 2021 The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales was inscribed onto the World Heritage List at the 44th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Fuzhou, China.

Gwynedd Council’s *World Heritage Site Management Plan for Public Engagement* (2019, 6 & 10) states:

*‘The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales was formed by the quarrying, processing and transportation of slate to produce roofing materials and architectural materials for global markets, from the late eighteenth century to the twentieth. As well as the quarries and mines themselves, this landscape has also been shaped by the need to create huge tips of waste rock; to process and transport slate; to manage water to power machinery; to house quarrymen and their families, and to provide for their material, moral and intellectual well-being.’*

**Appendix B** presents the Statement of Universal Value adopted by UNESCO.

The World Heritage Site comprises seven component parts, each of which demonstrates the full range and variety of the slate industry in Northwest Wales:

1. Penrhyn Slate quarry and Bethesda, and the Ogwen Valley to Port Penrhyn
2. Dinorwig Slate Quarry Mountain Landscape
3. Nantlle Valley Slate Quarry Landscape
4. Gorseddau and Princes of Wales Slate Quarries, Railways and Mills
5. Ffestiniog: its Slate Mines and Quarries, ‘city of slates’ and Railway to Porthmadog
6. Bryneglwys Slate quarry, Abernolwyn Village and the Talyllyn Railway
7. Aberllefenni Slate Quarry

Each one includes a relict slate quarry or quarries, associated processing areas and a quarry settlement or settlements. Most include elements related to the transport of slate.

The attributes of the World Heritage Site include:

- Heritage assets, including quarries, working faces, waste tips, historic buildings, monuments and railway systems.
- Inhabited settlements with historic street patterns, garden-plots, slate-slab field boundaries, wrought-iron gates and 19<sup>th</sup>-century dwellings.
- Transport, including railways, stations, works buildings, engineering workshops.
- The use of slate for roofing, architectural components, field boundaries and walls.
- The use of building material brought in through international trade, including bricks bought in by railway and Canadian timber.
- The Welsh language, traditions, spirit and feeling.

### **Description of the proposed development**

The proposed development is a small lateral extension of an existing active slate workings at Penrhyn Quarry, Bethesda, including tipping of overburden and quarried waste at two existing tips within the area of the existing workings. The extension will measure 1.6ha in area.

### **Assessment and evaluation of overall impact of the proposed development**

The proposed quarry extension has the potential to affect the first component part of the proposed World Heritage Site: Penrhyn Slate quarry and Bethesda, and the Ogwen Valley to Port Penrhyn.

**Table 1**, below, provides a summary of the potential impacts of the proposed extension.

#### *Direct impacts*

The proposed development will have no direct impact on the World Heritage Site.

#### *Indirect impacts*

Mineral extraction can indirectly affect the significance of heritage assets and their settings in a broad range of ways. These can include altering views (including principal or key views) from and to heritage assets and disturbance including increased noise, vibration, dust and light.

The PEA is located within the World Heritage Site buffer zone, adjacent to element 1.5: Mynydd Llandygai – Settlement; planned housing for quarrymen and their families.

**Table 1: Assessment of the potential impact of the proposed extension and tips on the Candidate World Heritage Site**

<b>Proposed development</b>	<b>Element of the WHS directly affected</b>	<b>Potential direct impact</b>	<b>Element/s of the CWHS indirectly affected</b>	<b>Element/s are broadly equivalent to Historic Landscape Character Area</b>	<b>Potential indirect impact</b>	<b>Attributes of the component part that could be affected</b>	<b>Value of heritage assets (based on Appendix 3A of ICOMOS 2011)</b>	<b>Assessment of indirect impact, based on and using terminology of ASIDOHL2</b>	<b>Assessment of overall impact, based on and using terminology of ASIDOHL2</b>
Extension	Buffer zone	None	1.5 Mynydd Llandygai	33 Mynydd Llandygai  Part of 41 Moel y Ci/Gwaen Gynfi unenclosed uplands	Views to and from the component part	1.5 Settlement, including planning housing - views	Very high (mentioned in statement of OUV)	1.5/33 - slight  1.5/41 - moderate	1.5/33 – very low  1.5/41 - low

The indirect impact of the proposed development has been assessed as part of the ASIDOHL2 assessment of two registered historic landscapes (see Appendix C). As a consequence, the results of the ASIDOHL assessment are directly relevant to the assessment of the impact on the World Heritage Site (Table 1).

#### *Overall assessment of impact*

The assessment of changes presented in Table 1 have been used to reach a conclusion on the significance of the indirect effects of the proposed development. **Table 2** assesses the significance of the impact of the proposed extension the potential affected element of the candidate World Heritage Site. The inter-relationship between the value of sensitivity and magnitude (based on table in ICOMOS 2011, 9-10).

**Table 2: The significance of impact of the proposed development**

<b>Proposed development</b>	<b>Element/s of the World Heritage Site affected</b>	<b>Attributes of the component part that could be affected</b>	<b>Value of Heritage Assets (based on Appendix 3A of ICOMOS 2011)</b>	<b>Assessment of overall impact, based on and using terminology of ASIDOHL2</b>	<b>Scale and severity of change/ impact, using terminology of ICOMOS 2011</b>	<b>Significance of impact</b>
Extension	1.5 Mynydd Llandygai	1.5 Settlement, including planning housing - views	Very high (mentioned in statement of OUV)	1.5 – very low/low	Negligible	Slight

#### **Conclusion**

Objective 7 of the *World Heritage Site Management Plan for Public Engagement* is ‘A sustainable slate industry’. Policy 7.1 states quarrying will not take place within the boundary of the World Heritage Site, but (under policy 7.2) will be permitted within the Buffer Zone, providing quarrying does not impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. These policies reflect the need to support the slate industry to continue to flourish and develop for the future (Gwynedd Council 2019, 118).

The proposed development will have no direct impact on the World Heritage Site nor its Outstanding Universal Value. This is because the proposed extension is outside its boundaries and within the buffer zone. Objective 7 and policy 7.2 allow for quarrying in the buffer zone.

Policy MWYN3 in the *Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026* seeks to avoid significant adverse impacts on sites of international heritage importance, including World Heritage Sites. The negligible impact of the proposed development is in accordance with this policy.

